**THE JOY OF THE LORD IS YOUR STRENGTH**

Nehemiah 7:73b-8:18

Key Verse 8:10

“Nehemiah said, ‘Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.’”

1. Who was Nehemiah and why was he in Jerusalem? (1:1-3; 2:1,5,11-12; 8:9) What was the situation in Jerusalem before he arrived? (2:17-18) Describe Nehemiah’s circumstances as chapter 8 opens. (6:14,17-19)
2. For what occasion did the Israelites assemble in Jerusalem? (6:15-16) Why was this a significant milestone for the Israelites? Who was Ezra and what did the people tell him to do? (8:1-3; Ezra 7:10) What can we learn here about celebrating times of thanksgiving and victory?
3. How did Ezra lead the worship service? (4-6) How did the people respond? What did the Levites do? (7-8) What lessons do we learn here about worshiping God, thanksgiving and Bible study? How can we pray for those who teach and proclaim God’s word?
4. As the people heard the words of the Law, how did they respond? (9) Why? What did Ezra, Nehemiah and the Levites tell them to do? (10-11) What does, “for the joy of the LORD is your strength” mean? How did the people celebrate and what gave them great joy? (12)
5. What did the Israelites do the next day and what did they relearn? (13-15) What does the Festival of Tabernacles commemorate? (Leviticus 23:33-43) How did the people respond? (16-18) Why might this festival have been particularly meaningful at this time? (17)
6. What do we learn about God’s character, his covenant with his people, and his word in this passage? How might these lessons strengthen your walk with the Lord personally and in community?